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A MODERN MOHEGAN-PEQUOT TEXT

By FRANK G. SPECK

The following text is in the dialect of the Mohegan-Pequots, a New England branch of the great Algonquian linguistic stock. The dialect was originally spoken by the Pequots, who, after migrating about the year 1600 from the upper Hudson River country, inhabited that portion of Connecticut lying between Connecticut river on the west, the Pawcatuck on the east, Long Island sound on the south, and the Nipmuck country on the north. The Mohegans, however, a mutinous offshoot of the Pequots, formed under Uncas a separate band about the year 1640, retaining nevertheless their maternal Pequot tongue.¹ Outside linguistic influences are noticeable, too, in some loan-words, but the dialect is practically identical with that of the Pequots of long ago. Today the modern Mohegan-Pequots number fewer than one hundred, their principal settlement being near Norwich, Conn.

Of these Indians there lives but one who still retains a knowledge of the ancient dialect, namely Fidelia A. H. Fielding, the narrator of the accompanying text. The writer's effort for a number of years has been to school himself with Mrs Fielding that her dialect and tradition may not pass away with her. It is needless to say that under such conditions of isolation a language must necessarily be found in a state of decay, and that much of the fulness and complexity of Indian grammar has been modified and lost. I might further mention that, previously to what has been done by Professor J. Dyneley Prince and myself, nothing has been written in connection with this dialect except a manuscript vocabulary by President Stiles of Yale College, a number of years ago. Consequently shortcomings on my part are due largely to scantiness of material and the decaying condition of the dialect as it survives today.

¹ See "The Modern Pequots and their Language," by J. Dyneley Prince and F. G. Speck, *American Anthropologist*, 1903, vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 193-212.

MOHEGAN-PEQUOT TEXT

(¹) *Inchūni'n wí'nai mō'wí ū'nkshā biū'mch New Lóndōnūg.* (²) *Sū'mí' dū'pkwā.* (³) *Gūtō'wí tú'bō jōhō'g?* (⁴) *Nā'wā jōkwí'ūn.* (⁵) *Wōtāiū''tūm bā'kimūs dā'bi nūtū'b nīdā'i yūdū'pkwūg.* (⁶) *Nūmō'wí tí ! tí ! skwū'ndōg.* (⁷) *Owā'nūks squā bí'yā yūnjō'nūm skwūnd.* (⁸) *Nūnūnā'wā.* (⁹) *Î'wā gūsūgwí'sh, wí'chū.* (¹⁰) *Nū'í'wā dā'bi nūtū'b yūdaí yūdū'pkwūg?* (¹¹) *Owā'nūks squā í'wā, náí ! mūd gūyū'ndūm, nūmí'cī tú'kūnīg dā jīshs, dā'bi gūmí'tchiūn?* (¹²) *Mūd nūyū'ndūmí' yūdū'pkwūg, mūs nūmí'jūnī wōmbū'nsiōñ.* (¹³) *Wō'nūks squā í'wā, chū'nchí mūd gū'í'wā gūnā'wānī yūdaí.*

(¹⁴) *Ũndai' nūpō'nūm nūmūnū'dí, dāg ũndai' nūzūmū'ksūn.* (¹⁵) *Nūgāwí'.* (¹⁶) *Yūmbō'wí nūgūtū'mkí.* (¹⁷) *Mūdjō'g jōkwí'ūn.* (¹⁸) *Jō'nāū gū'nkchí sūn, ũndái nūkō'nū'm nūtū'kūnīg dā jīshs gū'nkchí kaiyau gí'tūs mí'gūchíd dā'kū wōmbā'iyō skūn. Dí'biūg !*

Translation

An old Indian woman goes to sell brooms at New London (Conn.). It becomes very dark. Where is she going to stay? She sees a house. She thinks, "Perhaps I can stay there tonight." I go rap! rap! on the door. A white woman comes and opens the door. I know her. She says, "Come in"; she smiles. I say, "Can I stay here tonight?" The white woman says, "Yes! Are you not hungry? I made some bread and cheese, can you eat some?" "I am not hungry tonight. I will eat if I live in the morning." The white woman says, "You must not say that you saw me here." (She did not wish it to be known that she was a witch.)

Then I put down my back-basket, and then I lie down. I go to sleep. Early I arise. There is nothing (to be seen) of the house; it is all a great stone. Then I find my bread and cheese (to be) a great cold piece of cattle dung and a white bone. Horrors!

Analysis

1. *Inchūni'n wí'nai mō'wí ū'nkshā biū'mch New Lūndonūg.*

Inchūni'n—English loan-word for Indian + *in* man (pl. *inūg*). So *inski'dūmbāk*, concrete for Indians (Lat. *viri*) or 'true men.'

wí'nai—radical for 'woman,' containing stem *in*, often appearing as *wínais*, with contracted suffix *kchaisū* to be old, hence 'old woman.'

mō'wí—modal particle, denoting future and motion toward, from stem *m* to go, with probable 3d pers. element *w* and *i* modal. Also seen

in *nugutawi gī'shtūtūsh* I am going to wash. The common indicative future particle is *mūs*. *mō'wi* seems also to have the idea of purpose.

ū'nkshā — she sells, 3d pers. sing. trans. with inanimate objective wanting. *ū'nkshā* ought to show coördination with *mō'wi*.

biū'mch — Indianized English for 'brooms,' with usual inan. pl. ending *ch*, as *sūn* stone, *sūnch* stones. In all such transmutations Mohegans pronounce *n* or *y* for *r*; e. g., *yātsh* rat.

New Lóndonūg — *ūg* is nominal locative suffix meaning at, in, on. Said to be from *ū'ki*, earth, ground.

2. *Sū'mi' dū'pkwā*.

sū'mi' — superlative substantive 'too much.' Final *i* is 3d pers. inan. impers., seen also in other adverbial ideas, viz., *mīchi'mi* always (lit., 'it is always'), *m'tā'wi* much, *chūnchūchi'* only a little, etc. *sū'mi'* has usual meaning 'because.'

dū'pkwā — substantive, night.

3. *Gūtō'wi tū'bō jōhō'g?*

gūtō'wi — compounded of *t*, one of the stems 'to go,' and 3d pers. future modal *ō'wi*, as above (sentence 1) *mō'wi*.

tū'bō — 3d. pers. sing. animate of stem *tūb* or *dūp*, he stays, sits, exists, remains, etc. The 3d pers. sing. is made in the animate indic. by suffixing *ā*, *ō*, or *ū* to the stem; cf. *gīgītū'kū* he speaks, *wūskūsū* he writes, *nūpā'* he dies, etc.

jōhō'g — interr. compounded of *jō* or *chō*, simple interr. particle (as in *chāgwān* what?) and vocalic connective *h* + locative suffix *ūg* or *ōg*. *jō* also has the significance of an indef. relative, referring to inan. objects.

4. *Nā'wā jōkwī'ūn*.

nā'wā — 3d pers. sing. animate indic. prōn. *wā* suffixed to stem *nā*, to see, know, understand.

jōkwī'ūn — 'a white man's house,' probably from *jō* inan. indef. relative and form of *wī'tū* (?) house.

5. *Wōtāiū'tūm bā'kimūs dā'bi nūti'b nīdā'i yūdū'pkwūg*.

wōtāiū'tūm — from stem (composite) *aiū'tūm*, lit., 'to be minded' (cf. Ojibway *inendam* he thinks), + trans. 3d pers. prōn. *w* prefixed, and connective *t*. The principal element *ū'tūm* is found suffixed to stems of all verbs denoting a state of mind, and some others of a similar nature. See list of such verbs at end of analysis.

bā'kimūs — from *bā'ki*, a subjunc. verbal; stem *b* to come, and *mūs*, simple future indic. particle. *ki* is inan. 3d pers. The combination means maybe or perhaps.

dā'bi — an impersonal verb commonly in use denoting can, am able,

but derived from *dāp*, distantly meaning it is enough, with *i* inan. 3d pers. pron.

nūtū'b — 1st pers. sing. pron., with stem *tūb* (see sentence 3). The full form of pron. is wanting here.

(In considering the connection between these last three verbs I am inclined to think that they should be incorporated into one word, although the narrator keeps them divided: *bā — kī — mūs — dābī — nū — tūb* — (Potential) Come — it — will — it may happen, or be (subj.) — I — stay. The simple indicat. future *mūs* invariably precedes its verb, instead of being suffixed to another, as *bā' kīmūs*. The whole phrase, however, seems to be incorrectly construed.)

nīdā'i — from *nī*, demonstr. that + *dāi* inseparable locative adverbial suffix, so *yū'dai* here, *dō'dai* where (relative).

yūdū'pkwūg — composed of *yū*, demonstr. this, prefixed to *dū'pkwō* night, and locative *ūg*.

6. *Nūmō'wī tī! tī! skwū'ndōg*.

nūmō'wī — for *mō'wī* (see sentence 1), *nū*, 1st pers. sing. pron. The forms of this verb are defective throughout.

tī! tī! — exclamatory, 'rap! rap!'

skwū'ndōg — *skwūnd* door, locative *ōg* on.

7. *Owā'nūks squā bī'yā yūnjō'nūm skwūnd*.

owā'nūks — from *ōwā' nūg* pl. of *āwā'n* animate interr. and relative pron. 'who?' and ablative *ūtch* from, which appears mutilated in final *s*. The term *Owā'nūks* came to be used for the whites, illustrating the question in the native mind, "Whence did they come? Who are they?" The word is erroneously supposed by some to have come from the Indian term for "pale-face."

squā — usual suffix used dependently for female. Cf. *Chākū's squā* (Schaghticoke dialect; see Prince and Speck in *Proc. Amer. Philos. Soc.*, vol. XLII, no. 174) negress, *squā'sī's* little girl. *squā* is said to be derived from *ī'kwē* to split, with infixed *s*.

bī'yā — 3d pers. sing. animate of stem *bī* to come.

yūnjō'nūm. — from *yūnjā'n* open, conjunc. mood, transitive as shown by indef. obj. *ūm*. Cf. *nūqū'tsh' tūm*, I taste it.

skwūnd — see sentence 6.

8. *Nūnūnd'wā*.

nūnūnd'wā — I know her. Stem *nū* or *nā* to know, with incorporate subject *nū* and object animate *nā'wā*.

9. *ī'wā gūsūgwī'sh, wī'chū*.

ī'wā — 3d pers. sing. of stem *īw* to speak, whence *wūt* mouth; im-

perative form is *i'wāsh*. In all terms denoting parts of the body, local suffixes express the part of the body, as *qūnnū'ng* throat, *qū'ddūng* a swallowing.

gūsūgwī'sh — formed from stem *w* to come, with imperative *wīsh* or *īsh* modal suffix, and emphatic 2d pers. pron. prefixed, *gū*. *ūg* is perhaps locative with connective *s*.

wī'chū — Independent mood, 3d pers. sing. This verb also shows action of mouth, *wī*.

10. *Nū'i'wā dā'bi nūtū'b yūdaī yūdū'pkwūg?*

nū'i'wā — For *i'wā* (see sentence 9). *nū*, 1st pers. pron. with connective *t* wanting (*nūtūwā*).

dā'bi — see sentence 5.

nūtū'b — see sentence 5.

yūdaī — demonstr. *yū* this, with suffix, for which see sentence 5.

yūdū'pkwūg — same as sentence 5.

11. *Owā'nūks squā' i'wā, nāi! mūd gūyū'ndūm, nūmī'cī tū'kūnig dā jīshs, dā'bi gūmī'tchīūn?*

owā'nūks squā' — see sentence 7.

i'wā — see sentence 9.

nā'i — affirmative yes, possibly a subjunctive. The usual 'yes' monosyllabic is *nūk*.

mūd — This negative is an invariant particle, expressing all conditions of negation, prohibition, etc. Other forms must formerly have existed for different moods, but they are now obsolete.

gūyū'ndūm — 2d pers. sing. pron. *gū*, and *yū'ndūm* hungry, showing suffix *dūm* state of mind or body. See *wōtāiū'tūm*, sentence 5.

nūmī'cī — 1st pers. pron. with subjunc. element probably. I am undecided as to whether the stem is *wū'stū* he makes, or a stem containing *m*.

tū'kūnig — noun, bread, from *ptū'kwī* it is round, referring to cakes, loaves, whence bread. Final *g* denotes 'the thing that is.'

dā — coördinate conjunction. There probably existed a discrimination between this form and *dā'kū*, but none is noticeable now.

jīshs — English loan-word with Indian stress, i. e., 'cheese.'

dā'bi — see sentence 5.

gūmī'tchīūn — 2d pers. sing. transitive subj. of stem *mitch* to eat, with incorporate obj. *ūn*, inan.; so *gūwā'jinūm* you have it.

12. *Mūd nūyū'ndūmī yūdū'pkwūg, mūs nūmī'jūnī wōmbō'ñsīōñ.*

mūd — see sentence 10.

nūyū'ndūmī — for *nūyū'ndūm* see sentence 11; the final *i* or *mī* is the suffixed portion of the negative.

mūs nūmī'jūnī — 1st pers. sing. of the future subjunc. *nū* . . . *i*, and stem *mitch* with incorporate inan. object *ūn*.

wōmbō'ñsioñ — from *wō'mbōñ* sunrise, or tomorrow, and *sioñ* animate subjunc. 1st pers. 'if I.' A final *i* should be found to complete the subj. pron., but owing to the obscurity with which final vowels are pronounced, its absence is explained. *būn* may more properly be the stem 'to live,' but as this stem is not found now, I cannot be certain of it.

13. *Wō'nūks squā i'wā, chū'nchī mūd gū' i'wā gūnd'wānī' yūdai.*

wā'nūks squā — see sentence 7.

i'wā — see sentence 9.

chū'nchī — impersonal verb from *chū*, to want, or to be necessary, and *ch*, contracted for adjectival *gū'nchī* great, always used thus in composition (cf. Ojibwa *gitchē*). The final *i* is inan. 3d pers. sing. *chū'nchī* literally means 'it is greatly needed,' hence 'must.'

mūd gū' i'wā — another defective verb with 2d pers. sing. pron. and negative element loosely attached to stem *iw*; see sentence 9.

gūnd'wānī' — stem *nā*, for which see sentence 4, in conjunc. mood with preceding *i'wā*, having incorporate 2d pers. subject and 1st pers. object, *nī*, the 2d pers. subject *gū* being prefixed. This precedence of the 2d pers. over the 1st pers. is a common characteristic of nearly all North American languages. In the Tsimshian of the North Pacific coast, where the verb uses different stems for the sing. and the pl., the presence of a 2d pers. pron. influences the construction so much that the sing. or the pl. stem is used according to the number of the 2d pers. pron.

yūdai — see sentence 10.

14. *Ūndai' nūpō'nūm nūmūnū'di, dāg ūndai' nūzūmū'ksūn.*

ūndai' — *ūn* I cannot place. For *dai* see sentence 5; the meaning is 'then,' 'at that time.'

nūpō'nūm — from stem *pōn*, to put, to place, etc., with 1st pers. pron. and incorporate indef. object *ūm*. For similar transitive forms see sentence 7.

nūmūnū'di — made from *mūū'ndū* mystery, or *Mūū'ndū* God (cf. Ojibwa, etc., *Manitu*). Final *i* is inan. noun ending, as *bīō'ti* plate, etc.; and *nū* 1st pers. sing. pron., the whole meaning 'my basket,' cognate with idea of unknown inan. contents. Indians of the east designate a basket or its contents as objects which betray nothing of their internal character by their outside appearance or shape, hence the psychological analogy with God, or mystery.

dāg ūndai' — see sentences 11 and 14.

nūzūmū'ksūn — composed of *zū* 'from out of' (?) + connective *m*,

+ *ük*, locative down, or on; *sün* to fall (cf. *düksü'ni* I fall down), and 1st pers. pron. *nü*, intrans.

15. *Nügāwi'.*

nügāwi' — made from *gā'wi*, uninflected, 'sleep,' + 1st pers. pron. *nü*.

16. *Yūmbō'wi nüg'ütü'mki.*

yūmbō'wi — contraction of *yū*, demonstr. this; *ōmbi* time, and *wigü'* light. Or else final *i* is impers. 3d pers. pron. element; see *dā'bi*, *chū'nchi*, sentences 5 and 13.

nüg'ütü'mki — from *ō'mki* to get up, with *g* progressive, and 1st pers. pron., the suffixed element being absent, hence intrans.

17. *Mū'djōg jōkwü'ün.*

mū'djōg — negative *mūd*, + *jōg* inan. relative, elliptical for *jōgwā'n* a thing. *mū'djōgwā'n* 'nothing' also occurs.

jōkwü'ün — see sentence 4.

18. *Jō'nāu gū'nkchi sūn, ūndāi' nūkō'nū'm nütü'kūnig dā jīshs gū'nkchi kaiyau' gī'tūs mī'gūchid dā'kü wōmbāiyō skūn.*

jō'nāu — Intensive *jō*, inan. indef. with *nō*, or *nā'gūm*, a form of the independent animate 3rd pers. sing. pronoun.

gū'nkchi — emphatically protracted form of adjective *kchi'* great, large.

sūn — substantive, inan.; pl. *sūnch* stones.

ūndāi — see sentence 14.

nūkō'nūm — from *kū'nā* he catches, finds, hunts, etc., 1st pers. sing. trans. indic., with incorporate object *ūm*.

nütü'kūnig — same as in sentence 11, but with 1st pers. pron. In these nouns with pronoun elements the required subjective and objective sets have been lost.

dā — see sentence 11.

jīshs — see sentence 11.

kaiyau' — adjective from *tikā'* cold, hard, + *yū*, demons. this. This combination of the adjective and a demonstrative is frequent, so *squā'yau* red, *wōmbaiyau* white, *sūggā'yau* black, etc.

gī'tūs — possibly a generalization from *jits* bird, barnyard fowl, and broadly used for any general animal term, hence cattle. The animate pl. *gī'tūsūg* is commonly used at Mohegan to designate 'critters.'

mī'gūchid — derived from *mī'ki* hard, strong; ending *id* or *od* denotes inan. state of being.

dā'kü — see sentence 11.

wōmbāiyō — adjective white from *wō'mbi* white; see *kaiyau'* above.

skūn — inan. substantive, pl. *skūnch*.

19. *Dī'biüg* — pl. of animate noun *dī'bi*, from *chi'pi* terrible, awful, bad, whence Devil. Other forms of same occur, as *jibaiôg*, *tī'piüg*, *bī'biüg*.

Nouns and verbs are traceable to common radical elements, which take both suffixes and prefixes. Adverbial and pronominal affixes construct them into verbs; substantive (animate or inanimate) and pronominal affixes form them into nouns.

Furthermore, there is very little difference between intransitive verbs and nouns with possessive pronominal formatives, e. g., *nūgāwī'* I sleep, or my sleep; *nūnūpā'* I die, or my death.

The list of verbs containing element *ū'(tūm)* or *ū'(dūm)*, mentioned in sentence 5, follows:

<i>yū'ndūm</i> to be hungry, or, feel hunger;	<i>stwā'tūm</i> to feel sorry.
<i>kū'ngūtūm</i> to feel thirsty;	<i>chū'ntūm</i> to feel want.
<i>wī'ktūm</i> to feel love;	<i>jōkwā'tūm</i> to feel haste.
<i>qū'tshtūm</i> to feel taste;	<i>pū'dūm</i> to feel hearing.
<i>nūtū'ddūm</i> to find out by asking;	<i>mūddūmāmō</i> to feel badly or sick.

For further remarks on Mohegan-Pequot morphology see Prince and Speck, "Glossary of the Mohegan-Pequot Language," *American Anthropologist*, N. S., vol 6, No. 1, pp. 18-21.